00465

1961/07/14

FROM VIENTIANE TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Cypher/OTP

FOREIGN OFFICE (SECRET) AND WHITEHALL (SECRET) (CABINET) DISTRIBUTION

Mr. Addis
No. 921
July 14, 1961

D: 12 Noon July 14, 1961
R: 1.47 p.m. July 14, 1961

PRIORITY
SECRET

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 921 of July 14.
Repeated for information to:

Geneva	New Delhi
Bangkok	Ottawa
Singapore	Canberra
Moscow	Wellington

And Saving to:

Paris
Washington

My telegram No. 910 and Geneva telegram No. 484 to Foreign Office.

I compared notes with the United States Ambassador, who has been absent for the past week.

2. He has clear impression General Phoumi feels, as a result of the visit to Washington, he now has more American support. In speaking to the United States Ambassador and member of his staff since returning to Vientiane, General Phoumi has consistently taken the line that he is not at all hopeful that negotiations between the three Princes will succeed. He asked in Washington whether the United States Government backed the solution of Souvanna Phouma as Prime Minister, but got, as I understand it, no very clear reply. In Washington and since his return here, he has expressed to the Americans his opposition to this solution and has described Souvanna Phouma as lost beyond recall. The United States Ambassador thinks General Phoumi is now going all out for the solution of the King as Prime Minister and that he

/believes

SECRET

believes that there is just a chance this may come off. If this solution is rejected by the other side, the United States Ambassador thinks General Phoumi expects the resumption of fighting and that he is already thinking of planning for action in this eventuality, when the dry season starts in October or November. The United States Ambassador commented that he does not think the King has yet made up his mind to act as Prime Minister. When I asked what General Phoumi would do if the King designated Souvanna Phouma as Prime Minister, the United States Ambassador said that he thought General Phoumi would accept [? grp. omitted] satisfactory.

3. In Washington, General Phoumi gave as his estimate that the other side had had in Laos six Laotian battalions and three Viet Minh battalions. The United States Ambassador does not accept this as being anything near the truth, but did not give any preferable estimate. I shall try to pursue this further.

4. This rather as expected; the other side of the medal. For the present I cannot go beyond my telegram No. 764 and my telegram under reference in attempting to estimate Phoumi's intentions.

Foreign Office pass Priority to U.K.Mission Geneva (for Laos delegation) No. 178, Bangkok No. 622, Singapore No. 501, Moscow No. 290 and Routine to New Delhi No. 237, Ottawa No. 127, Canberra No. 267, Wellington No. 106 and Saving to Paris No. 128 and Washington No. 49.

[Repeated as requested and copy sent to Tel Section C.R.O. for repetition to Delhi, Ottawa, Canberra, Wellington.]

o-o-o-o